

Libro de embeñar las lenguas inglesa y yudiš: La América's Guidebook to Learning English and Yiddish and Becoming an American Citizen

Libro de embeñar las lenguas inglesa y yudiš: *El manual de La America para aprender inglés y yiddish y conseguir la ciudadanía americana*

Julie Scolnik

jscolnik@hotmail.com
CSIC Madrid

Recibido: 27/03/2014 | Aceptado: 15/09/2014

Resumen

Este artículo es un estudio de un libro publicado por el periódico *La América* para que los inmigrantes sefardíes en los Estados Unidos pudiesen aprender inglés y yidish, lo cual les ayudaría a integrarse y progresar. El editor, Moise Gadol, se esforzaba para hacer la emigración a los Estados Unidos más fácil y por eso el periódico se distribuía no solo en América sino también en los países del imperio otomano. En el libro se habla de la inmigración, advirtiendo de las posibilidades de ser devuelto a sus países de origen, de la vida en América, proporciona las preguntas y respuestas del examen para conseguir la nacionalidad estadounidense y al final incluye un método para aprender inglés y yidish que consta de veinticuatro páginas de palabras y veinticuatro páginas de conversación, todo escrito en *aljamiá*, inglés inclusive.

Palabras clave: sefardíes; *La América*; inglés; yidish; inmigración.

Abstract

This article is the study of a book published by the Sephardic newspaper *La América* so that the Sephardic immigrants in the United States could learn English and Yiddish and thus better adapt to their life in the new country and even prosper. Its editor, Moise Gadol endeavored to make immigrating to the United States easier which is why the newspaper was distributed not only in the United States but also in cities of the Ottoman Empire. The book includes articles on immigration, warning the readers of the possible reasons for being denied entry, life in America and the questions and answers of the exam to become a U.S. citizen. The last part is a method to learn English and Yiddish which consists of twenty-four pages of vocabulary and twenty-four pages of conversation, all of which is *aljamiado*, English included.

Keywords: Sephardim; *La América*; English; Yiddish; immigration.

 CÓMO CITAR ESTE TRABAJO | HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

Scolnik, J. (2014), *Libro de embezar las linguas inglesa y yudiš: La América's Guidebook to Learning English and Yiddish and Becoming an American Citizen. Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos. Sección Hebreo*, 63: 285-297.

In 1910 Moise Gadol, a Sephardic Jew from Bulgaria, founded the Judeo– Spanish newspaper *La América* which declared itself to be a «national, literary, political and commercial weekly» and whose intent was to help the Sephardic immigrants settle in the United States and find their way in everyday life in their new country. The first issue of the *aljamiado*¹ newspaper was published in New York City on 11 November 1910 and the journal continued to be published once a week on Friday until 1925. The first issue consisted of four pages, but on 12 July 1912 each issue was extended to six pages. In the early years each issue cost three cents, rising to five cents in later years.

Gadol used the newspaper to familiarize the Sephardic immigrants from the Old World with the modern society to which they arrived. He constantly encouraged them to learn English, even Yiddish, so that they would have an easier time finding employment². The Sephardim settled in the Lower East Side of Manhattan where the dominant language was Yiddish or English, and many of them worked in factories with Yiddish–speaking managers, owners and employees³. Thus, the need to learn Yiddish may very well have prevailed over that to learn English, especially considering the numerical difference between these two Jewish communities highlighted by Joseph Papo in *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America*:

The migration to America of some 30,000 Sephardi Jews coincided with the largest and most important migration in all of modern Jewish history, that of roughly two million Ashkenazi Jews, mostly from Russia, who came to these shores from 1881 to 1924. Like their Yiddish-speaking co-religionists, the overwhelming majority of the Sephardi immigrants lived in over-crowded tenements in New York's Lower East side, perhaps the most densely settled area on earth in the first decade of the century⁴.

This conviction of the importance of learning English and Yiddish prompted Gadol to print English lessons at the bottom of the pages of *La América* which could be cut out and saved and which evidently contained conversation as Stephen Levy, an avid reader of *La América*, informs us that «Intermittently during 1911 and 1912 the paper...

1. *Aljamiado* is the term that indicates that Judeo–Spanish was written in Hebrew square letters or Rashi script.
2. Angel, 1982: 140.
3. Angel, 1982: 109.
4. Papo, 1987: 43.

printed conversations composed in a simple, though not altogether flawless English. The conversations entrance me». He then proceeds to reproduce two of the conversations, one regarding looking for lodging and the other about finding work⁵.

In 1916 Gadol published a method to learn English and Yiddish, a book entitled *Libro de embezar las linguas inglesa y yudiš*⁶ *muy primorošo y provechošo para todos los judíos españoles imigrados o que piensan imigrar en América*⁷. It contains no information as to who the author or authors may have been. The New York Public Library [henceforth NYPL] has a partial edition from a previous date, July 1911, which contains 24 pages of vocabulary and states on the title page that it is only a «parte primera». A later and also partial edition, dating from 1937 when *La América* no longer existed, is to be found at the Library of Congress. The title is somewhat different: *Libro de embezar a hablar, meldar y escribir de judeo-español-en inglés y yidiš* (here it clearly says Yiddish) and consists of twenty-four pages of conversation and the questions and answers of the exam to become an American citizen. The title page is written both in Judeo-Spanish and in English and includes in these languages: «Edited and published by Moise S. Gadol, New York, Copyright 1937 by M. S. Gadol» and «Editado y publicado por Mois w Gadol Niu-York, diritos de reproducción reservados».

Recently in Seattle Washington a first complete copy of the book in the United States has appeared; no other complete copy of the book exists in any library in the U.S. It belongs to Isaac Azose, a member of the large Sephardic community there who has lent it to the University of Washington to be scanned. The Seattle Sephardic Treasures Initiative, in the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies is headed by Devin Naar whose goal is to scan and digitalize the numerous Ladino works that members of the Sephardic community are bringing to him, to make them easily accessible for scholars to consult. He hopes this initiative will become the largest Ladino library in the United States⁸.

Curiously, the newspaper *La Vara*, published in New York from 1922 until 1948, published a book to learn Judeo-Spanish and English, no date given, kindly sent to me by the NYPL. After comparing the *La Vara*'s booklet with that of *La América* I conclude that *La Vara*'s booklet, which only contains the section on vocabulary and conversation, to be a re-edition or reprinting of the book published by *La América* for two reasons. First, *La Vara* was not founded until 1922, six years after the publication of *La América*'s booklet; and second, the content (vocabulary and conversation) is identical to that of *La América*'s book.

5. Matza, 1997: 167-171.

6. The use of *yudiš* instead of *yidiš* is an example of what Yiddishists call «daytshmeish», words and forms imitating German. For example, «Jude» for «Jew» or «Jüdisch» for «Jewish». The phenomenon was common in the Yiddish press etc. at the time *Libro de embezar* was published. I would like to thank Professor David Bunis for clarifying this question for me.

7. For the transcription to Latin script, we use the system adopted by the Spanish School of Sephardic Philology and by the journal *Sefarad* which is amply explained by Hassan, 1978:147-150.

8. <http://www.jta.org/2012/07/15/life-religion/rushing-to-preserve-ladino-legacies> The page was visited on 23 March 2014.

Since the only complete edition I found of Gadol's *Libro de embezar las linguas inglesa y yudiš* was published in 1916 and is held in the National Library of Israel, it is this edition that I have used. It includes twenty–four pages of vocabulary and twenty–four pages of conversation in four columns which from right to left are Judeo–Spanish in Rashi script, English written in Rashi script, English in Latin script and Yiddish in Rashi script. In order to familiarize the Sephardic immigrants with the process of U.S. immigration and becoming a U.S. citizen, the book consists of articles on these subjects, which, as Gadol considered them to be of utmost importance, will be discussed here before turning our attention to the method for learning English and Yiddish, which is found at the end of the book.

These articles were not only directed to the Sephardic immigrants living in the United States, mainly New York, but also to encourage the Sephardic Jews still living in the Old World to emigrate to the United States. We know from an article published in *La América* on 7 January 1916 that the newspaper was distributed not only in numerous cities in the United States: New York, Seattle, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Montgomery, Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland, Philadelphia, Indianapolis and San Luis, but, also in Vienna, London, Belgrade, Constantinople, Salonika, Kavala, Jerusalem, etc.⁹.

As we have seen while studying the advertisements found in *La América*¹⁰ the book was often advertised, for example on 20 October 1922, page 5; 25 August 1922, page 6; 19 January 1923, page 4, which we reproduce below, and always as a complete book although we have seen that there was at least one edition published earlier, in July 1911 held at the NYPL which contains twenty–four pages of vocabulary. We cannot be sure if this was a complete book and for some reason only twenty–four pages of it exist in the NYPL; or if this section of twenty–four pages of vocabulary was originally published by Gadol as a mere first part of the book.

Libros de embezar español-inglés¹¹. Los bien interesantes libricos de español-inglés-idiš son prontos en vendita en nuestra redacción. Estos libros que es nueva edición contiene 80 hojas con los puntos siguientes:

1. Por la imigración
2. La ley de imigración
3. La vida americana
4. Métođa por embezar a escribir y meldar en español y inglés
5. Palabras, 24 páginas
6. Conversación, 24 páginas
7. Exámen por devenir súdito americano

9. Scolnik, 2013: 72.

10. For more information regarding advertisements in *La América* see Scolnik, 2014.

11. Español–inglés is written in bold in the original *aljamiado* text.

1. National Anthem

Although the national anthem is listed as the last item to appear in this book, the copy I received from the National Library of Israel has it as page one. The opportunity to read the Judeo–Spanish translation of the U. S. national anthem was enticing. However, what I encountered was not *The Star Spangled Banner* but the *Hatikvah* («The Hope»). At the first Zionist Congress in 1897 the *Hatikvah* was proclaimed the Zionist hymn and in 1948, the year of the creation of the State of Israel it was declared the National anthem of Israel. It is true that Moise Gadol and *La América* were of Zionist tendency. Gadol was deeply committed to Zionsim from his earliest youth and became the first president of the Zionist Sephardim Society of New York which was established on 25 July 1914¹².

However in a booklet dedicated to immigration in the United States it would have been more logical for the «Cante nacional» to be the U.S. national anthem. Although Schmid indicates that the lyrics were translated into Judeo–Spanish by Abraham Cappon¹³, Gadol’s book does not specify who translated these lyrics. We cannot maintain beyond any doubt that Gadol used Cappon’s translation as we have not been able to find Cappon’s lyrics to compare them with the lyrics in this book.

2. Immigration

This article consists of two pages, includes a drawing of the kind of steamships that used to make the Atlantic crossing and gives us an idea of what it was like to make this crossing. It starts out by saying: «Nuestro pueblo sefardí, afin de emejórar sus situaciones económicas o fuyendo de las injusticias de los países del mundo viejo, se embarcan en los vapores de salvación semeјantes». It then says that the first thing the immigrants see is:

la única en el mundo [la] ĝigantesca statua de la libertad. Así es que cada uno que alcanza a ver esta statua ya se conta aribado en este mundo de llena libertad. Aquí no hay como en el mundo viejo demandar por pasaportos. Ma cada imigrante pasa por la comisión de imigración a las demandas de las cuala debe responder ĵusto y verdad. Por cualquier mentira que hablarías presto se aferá y lo voltan atrás. Por esta cavsa cada imigrante debe antes de partir de meldar bien la ley de la imigración aquí publicada...

Once the immigrant has safely reached America and passed the controls of Ellis Island the article points out something of great importance and that is the kind of help

12. Angel, 1982: 130-132.

13. Schmid, 2010: 102.

the Jews could count on from Jewish organizations: «Después que entra al mundo de la libertad topan muchas instituciones judías de ayudo. Las organizaciones judías de América ya topan los remedios por non dejar sufrir en ningún raporto los imigrantes de muestra nación judía.»

Aviva Ben Hur, however, describes a more realistic picture of these Jewish organizations:

In both their infrastructure and self-conception Jewish organizations in the United States were tacitly established to accommodate not Jewish immigrants but rather, Eastern European Ashkenazic immigrants. [...] Yes, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews were indeed fellow Jews. But they did not possess the cultural and linguistic characteristics associated with Askenazic Jewry. Moreover, the cultural and linguistic attributes that made them distinctive (“Spanish”, “Arabic” and “Greek” heritage) marked them in the minds of decisive Ashkenazic leaders more as gentiles than as Jews¹⁴.

3. The American Immigration Law

The next article, consisting of four pages is entitled «Ley de inmigración en América, trasladada del original de Vašington del 4 may 1911» («Acta por la inmigración del 20 februar 1907») which first informs us that prior to purchasing a ticket for the voyage by ship every immigrant was required to pay a tax of four dollars to enter the U.S. The article then goes on to enumerate in point number two those cases in which entry will be prohibited. The following are examples of such cases:

1. A personas que pueden caer a la carga del público.
2. A personas flacas de meollo, idiotas.
3. A personas hacinas o que tuvieron ataques de insanidad.
4. A personas atacadas de tuberculoša.
5. A personas mendicantes, falsadores, criminales, poligamistas (gente que creen en muchas mujeres), anarquistas y gente contra personas políticas y gubernamentales.
6. A muchachas o mujeres malhonestas que vienen con inteciones inmorales de prostitución (ženut) y a gente que acompañarían semejantes mujeres por hacer negocios malhonestos con ellas.

14. Ben-Hur, 2009: 124-125.

7. A personas que vienen con contrato por laborantes en lugar fixado de adelantado o que vienen soto prometas de alguno que le dará laboro en este país¹⁵.

Articles three and five deal with the punishment of heavy fines or prison sentences for those having brought «mujeres malhonestas» or those having «ayudado a algunos imigrantes por haécerlos venir a los Estados Unidos soto contrato.»

Article seven states that the steamship companies are allowed to publish their departure and arrival times or the price of their tickets but «a ningún precio no les es permitido de agítar o encorajar a algunos imigrantes de venir en América», the punishment for doing so being that of article five, that is to say one thousand dollars.

Articles ten and eleven state that passengers with contagious diseases or children under the age of sixteen who are not accompanied by «sus protector» will be deported.

As can be seen by these prohibitions, restrictions and heavy fines, immigration to the United States was no easy matter for the Sephardim, especially as the vast majority had no knowledge of English.

4. Life in America

This four page article paints a magnificent picture of life in America, an idealized depiction of America where merchants pay no tax on their merchandise, where the government has abundant public baths, hospitals and charity organizations for the needy, all of which are totally free and magnificent parks, museums etc. are at the disposal of the general public for free as are the concerts the government organizes. In all public places refreshments of soda and ice cream (*aišcrim*) can be found. We can assume that the goal was to entice the Sephardim in the Old World to emigrate to the United States where a better life awaited them.

This description of life in America includes other diverse things such as enrolling in the army where every soldier has «comer, beber y dormir debaldes y una paga de 17 dólares al mes»; the justice system in which «todas dificultades entre unos con otros en muy poco días es presto decidido» and where in every apartment block:

Se topa una farmacia que son obligadas de dar primer ayudo medical a cada paciente en cavso de cualunque accidente. Avista de algún aviso telefónico, la ambulanza del gobierno viene y lleva al paciente al hospital necesario onde sanar al paciente sin ninguna paga.

And with respect to work, we are told that «En géneral los laboradores haécn mejor vida que los patrones mísmos, siendo bien pagados, bien organizados, independientes

15. Today you are permitted a three months' stay as a tourist in the United States but you are forbidden to remain any longer if you do not have a visa with a work contract.

y las lees del país los protege bien.» The idea that workers lead a better life than their employers is also an idealized description of life in America at the time.

Given *La América*'s firm position that the immigrants should learn English, education and the instruction of English are also included in this article:

Por todas las partes el gobierno detiene a la disposición del pueblo escuelas por embezar la lingua del país que son abiertas de día para la juventud, y de noche para la clasa laborante y aedada, aparte para hombres y mujeres, todo sin ninguna paga [...] Los parientes deben enviar sus criaturas a las escuelas fin edad de 16 años. Otramente el gobierno les impone severa penalitá.

5. Learning how to read and write English

Before we discuss Gadol's method to learn English and Yiddish, it should be noted that whereas to date we know of no other method of learning English taught through Judeo-Spanish specifically for the Sephardim, numerous methods to learn English taught in Yiddish existed, no doubt due to the fact that Yiddish speakers were the majority Jewish group. Perhaps one of the most well-known is *Ollendorf's Method to Acquire a Thorough Knowledge of the English Language Without the Aid of a Teacher* published in 1893 by Alexander Harkavy. It consists of over 600 pages. Having examined this lengthy book, and having been an English teacher for more than twenty years, I conclude that due to its complexity it would be very difficult to learn English on one's own with this method. Contrary to the useful conversations published by Gadol, in general Harkavy's sentences do not follow any kind of order, they do not create situations: «1. Send me a man but do not send him late. 2. I want a man. 3. I had no pen and ink. 4. He is not ill; he is all well. 5. He has a lame hand. 6. He wore a bonnet»¹⁶. In addition whereas Gadol offers no lessons on grammar, *Ollendorf's Method* is saturated with complicated grammar.

The conversation part of Gadol's method is actually what is known nowadays as the Situational Language Teaching Method which was developed by British applied linguists in the 1930s to 1960s and as such can be considered avant guard for its time. The different conversations which appear in Gadol's method represent situations found in everyday life such as renting a room, finding a job, the need to buy new clothes etc.

In «Método para embezar a escribir y meldar en judeo-español y en inglés» (here it says nothing regarding Yiddish although as the title of the book indicates Yiddish is also taught) we are first provided with the letters of the Hebrew and English alphabets. In four columns from right to left we find the Hebrew alphabet in its three forms: square, Rashi, and cursive letters and lastly the English alphabet. This method gives the equiva-

16. Harkavy, 1893: 7-26.

lent of the Hebrew letters only in English, not in Yiddish, in both capital and small letters. The letters of the Hebrew *alevbet* in their alphabetical order are followed by the equivalent letter in the English alphabet. Taking a closer look at these letters we see that *vet* is considered to be the equivalent of both English *v* and *w* but in reality although *w* is *vet* in Yiddish it is not *vet* in English and this leads to mistakes in the transcriptions of words. We will come back to this question shortly.

After the alphabet there are fourteen sample words in Judeo–Spanish without a translation in English written, from right to left, in the three forms of Hebrew letters and lastly the word in Latin script. The alphabet is followed first by three pages of advertisements and then by twenty–four pages of vocabulary or «palabras», a total of 457 words.

The vocabulary is also divided into four columns which are from right to left «español» (*aljamiado* Judeo–Spanish), *aljamiado* English, English written in Latin script and *aljamiado* Yiddish. The vocabulary consists of days of the week, parts of the day, seasons, parts of the body, meals and food, clothing, furniture and utensils, the family, professions, parts of the house, animals, fruits, months, nationalities and countries, parts of speech such as adjectives, especially antonyms, verbs, and pronouns, and numbers.

The Judeo–English words are a phonetic transcription of how the word is pronounced. We are not going to go into a detailed linguistic analysis of this transcription but, rather we are going to look at the curiosities that arise with English in Hebrew script and except for two instances we are going to leave a comparison of English and Yiddish for a later date.

For example, what happens with the pronunciation of *th* and *w* when these letters are written in Rashi script? Where *th* is dental, fricative, voiceless as in «teeth», *tet* is used for example in words such as theatre, month, thank, nothing, Thursday and where *th* is dental, fricative voiced as in «mother» *dalet* is used in words like clothing, there, those, other and the definite article, which is spelled *dalet yod*.

The question of the transcription of *w* is more complicated. Taking a closer look at these letters we see that *vet* is considered to be the equivalent of both English *v* and *w* but in reality although *w* is *vet* in Yiddish it is not *vet* in English and this leads to mistakes in the transcriptions of words. Thus we see transcriptions of words like *water* or *to work* written with *vet* which is most likely an indication of the influence of Yiddish on the English spoken by the Ashkenazi immigrants.

This pronouncing of *w* as *vet* can lead to confusion with the Yiddish word in some cases. Take for example the word for «lobo» which in the English and Yiddish transcriptions is written identically *vet*, *vav*, *lamed*, *feh*. Whereas in Yiddish the first letter is indeed pronounced *v* as *vet* indicates, in English it is not a *v* but a clear *w*. In addition, the vowel represented by *vav* is pronounced *o* in Yiddish and *u* in English, but the reader/student of this method has no way of knowing that although spelled the same, this word is in fact pronounced differently in English and Yiddish.

We find another two ways of transcribing the phoneme «w» in the Judeo–Spanish vocabulary and conversation. One, the transcription of «wh» using *het*, *vav alev*, as in the words *whatever* and *whichever* and *alev*, *vav* or simply *vav* as in the word *where*.

As for the pronunciation of *s* alveolar fricative unvoiced as in *sort* and voiced as in *rose* it is generally reflected correctly, but we find another case where the word is written the same in English and Yiddish but in fact pronounced differently and this is the case of the word for «sopa», *soup*, written *zayin*, *vav*, *peh*. In both English and Yiddish *s* is written with *zayin* which is correct for Yiddish but not for English where it should be written with *samekh*.

Another problem that appears when writing English in Hebrew script is the subject of long and short vowels in English. It is not always possible to indicate the correct pronunciation. The word *clock* is written with *alev* in which case the short *a* correctly corresponds to the pronunciation of the word. On the other hand the word *man* is written with *yod* which would actually represent the pronunciation of the plural form, *men*. The fact that each vowel in English is pronounced in two different ways (long and short) whereas there is only one way to pronounce those in Spanish and thus Judeo–Spanish renders it impossible to faithfully indicate in Rashi script in some cases how a vowel is pronounced in English.

Another question is that of silent letters. In the word *Wednesday* the author or authors of this method have correctly left out the Judeo–Spanish equivalent of *d*, *dalet*. However with the word *autumn* they have included *nun* as the last letter although the *n* is not pronounced in English.

The truth is that by looking exclusively at the *aljamiado* English version of some of the words without actually seeing the word written in English it is sometimes quite difficult to make out the word. Take for instance *earth* spelled *alev*, *vav*, *alev*, *yod*, *resh*, *tet* or *towel* spelled *tet*, *alev*, *alev*, *vav*, *alev*, *yod*, *lamed*.

After the twenty–four pages of vocabulary we come to twenty–four pages of conversation, in three columns: «español» (Judeo–Spanish) in Rashi script, English in Rashi script and Yiddish also in Rashi script. The section devoted to conversation begins with polite expressions such as «Good day sir», «Good evening madam», «How do you do», «I am much obliged to you», «I thank you for your kindness» etc. This is followed by expressions of time in which we find another strange combination of letters in Judeo–English, *qu* in the word *quarter* which is written *cof*, *vet*, *vav*, *resh*, *dalet*, *resh*. The use of *dalet* instead of *tet* reflects the American pronunciation of *t*. The subject of time continues with statements about clocks and watches, for example «My clock has stopped. I must wind it» and expressions with «it’s time to get up, go to bed» etc.

Then we come to conversation about what kind of food and drink is desired and after this, the need to buy new clothes: «My shoes are old and worn out» (here with the word *worn* is another case where *vet* is mistakenly used to indicate the pronunciation of *w*). Next comes the search for lodging mentioned earlier which consists of a conversation of thirty–four sentences that include: «Have you any rooms to let? How many apart–

ments do you want? I want a dining room, a parlor, and a bedroom. Do you want the rooms furnished? There you have a very good and clean bed... There is also a bathroom in this house.»

We see in this conversation about renting a room that bartering went on: «How much do you ask for this room? What will you offer for it? I will give you 12 dollars. Well, I am satisfied.»

After this we find another useful conversation, this time regarding trades and work: «Can you operate on a sewing machine? To be sure I can»... «How much do you earn a week? I earn six dollars a week». In the following sentence we find a grammatical mistake which is a common one also made by students of English today: «I have been out of work since two weeks» instead of «for two weeks». In this sentence we see the *w* transcribed in two ways: *vet* in *work* and *alev*, *vav* for *weeks*.

We learn about work hours: «I start at six o'clock in the morning», «I return at seven o'clock in the evening», wages: «I have a family to support and I am getting such small wages» (*vet* for wages). And last but not least the advice to join a labor union:

«How can the workmen improve their condition?» Answer: «By uniting against their employer.» And the last entry in the section dedicated to conversation is «Union is power.»

6. The Exam for Becoming an American Citizen

The last section contains sample questions and answers to the exam for becoming a U.S. citizen, the complete title of which is «Exámen por devenir súdito americano, demandas y repuestas por obtener los segundos documentos de suditanza Americana». The first documents were the papers each immigrant received upon arrival in the United States. It consists of three columns. From right to left the questions in Judeo-Spanish, the answers in Judeo-Spanish and last the questions with their answers underneath in English in Latin script.

There are thirty-two questions with their answers. The candidate is expected to know about the constitution, who makes the laws of the federal, state and city governments, how many senators and congressmen there are and how they are elected, if the president is elected directly or indirectly and how long his term is. In addition, each person is expected to know the capital of the state in which he lives and how many congressmen are elected to the House of Representatives from his state, as well as to know that there are two senators per state.

In article 2 *La América* claims that the United States is very pleased with the Sephardic immigrants because they become U.S. citizens who work hard not only to make a living for themselves but also to contribute to the progress of their adopted country: «El gobierno American es muy contente de nuestro pueblo, por razón que todos muestran la reconocencia a la América, en deviniendo súdito americanos y laboran en todos los sortes por sus progreso y el progreso se los Estados Unidos.»

The booklet ends with four advertisements of which we are only going to look at one, that of *La América* itself which confirms Gadol's intention that the Sephardim living in the Old World be informed about news and laws concerning immigration in America. In addition to giving the address and the date when it was founded (November 1910) the advertisement for *La América* describes itself thus:

Propaganda siempre por la union jüdías (entre sefardim y ašquenazim) Y contiene las novedades las más exactas de América y de lo que se pasa en todo el mundo judio. Es el único periódico que mete al coriente al mundo judeo-español de todo lo que se pasa de parte a parte. Este jurnál es absolutamente indispensable para todo judio sefardí y ainda más de grande importancia para los que piensan imigrar en los Estados Unidos por la simple razón que él publica de tiempo en tiempo novedades y lees concernando la imigración en América etc.

Moise Gadol continually endeavored to help the Sephardic immigrants. We have seen that the guidebook or syllabus *Libro para embezar las linguas inglés y yudiš, muy primorošo y provechošo para todos los jüdíos españoles imigrados o que piensan imigrar en América* did indeed provide the Sephardim both in the United States and in the Old World with useful information about U.S. immigration, life in America (to some extent idealized), and the questions and answers for the exam to become an American citizen.

Exactly how well English and Yiddish could be learned from the syllabus is not quite clear. The book intended to give the Sephardic reader/student a basic knowledge of English and Yiddish a kind of survival course, probably mainly to help them get along at work. If in Judeo-Spanish we are often faced with the difficulty of transcribing the vowels represented by *yod* and *vav*, in Judeo-English the question of vowels is even more difficult and phonemes such as *th*, *w* and *qu* are not properly reflected, so the Sephardic reader would probably not know how to pronounce the vocabulary correctly in many instances. Still, Gadol's commitment to Sephardic immigration in the United States and his initiative in publishing this booklet must be applauded.

7. References

- ANGEL, M. (1982), *La America: The Sephardic Experience in the United States*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.
- Ben-Hur, A. (2009), *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History*. New York: New York University Press.
- HARKAVY, A. (1893), *Ollendof's Method to Acquire a Thorough Knowledge of the English Language Without the Aid of a Teacher*. New York: Kantrowitz and Katzenelenboken.

- HASSAN, I. M. (1978), Transcripción normalizada de textos judeoespañoles. *Estudios sefardíes* 1: 147–150.
- MATZA, D. (ed.), (1997), *Sephardic-American Voices: Two Hundred Years of Literary Legacy*. Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press.
- PAPO, J. (1987), *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America: In Search of Unity*. San Jose, CA.: Pelé Yoetz Books.
- SCHMID, B. (2010), “Por el adelantamiento de la nación.” Las ideas lingüísticas de Abraham A. Cappón. In Díaz Mas, P. – Sánchez Pérez, M. (eds.), *Los sefardíes ante los retos del mundo contemporáneo: identidad y mentalidades*. Madrid: CSIC: 99–112.
- SCOLNIK, J. (2013), The American Connection: To and Fro between *La America* of New York and the Judeo-Spanish Press of the Middle East and Territories of the Ottomine Empire. In Sanchez, R. – Bornes Varol, M. C. (eds.), *La presse judéo-espagnole: support et vecteur de la modernité*. Istanbul: Libra Kitap:71-84.
- (2014), Advertisements in the Judeo-Spanish Periodical *La América*: A Reflection of the Sephardic society in New York. *Ladinar*, 7-8: 291-302.